

## GEORGIA-NATO RELATIONS



The aim of Georgia's security policy is to build safe and stable environment conducive to the democratic development of the state. To further this goal Georgia's top foreign policy priority has been Euro-Atlantic integration since 1990s.

The foundation for NATO-Georgia relations was laid in 1992, when Georgia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which transformed into Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. Cooperation with NATO was significantly enhanced after Georgia joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1994, aimed at deepening relations in defence and security issues among NATO member states and partners.

An important milestone in the history of NATO-Georgia relations was the NATO Prague Summit in 2002, where Georgia officially declared its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

In 2004 Georgia became the first country to receive and implement Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP). IPAP represented a plan of actions with precise timeframes, according to which Georgia undertook some specific obligations toward the Alliance. Although the IPAP was not designed as a NATO membership mechanism, it was highly important format of cooperation in the context of the reforms that took place in the country. The document covered wide-range of reforms in different areas, which necessitated joint highly coordinated efforts of the Government of Georgia towards their implementation.

NATO International Staff conducted IPAP implementation assessment on a yearly basis. From 2004- up to 2008, in total 5 assessments has been conducted (4 official and 1 unofficial).

In September 2006, with a view to get closer to NATO standards, the Alliance has initiated cooperation with Georgia under the framework of "Intensified Dialogue on Membership Issues".

The Intensified Dialogue was a joint cooperation mechanism between Georgia and NATO, as well as a preparatory phase that would move forward Georgia's NATO integration agenda.

In the framework of Intensified Dialogue multiple NATO-Georgia consultations were held on political issues as well as issues related to: security, peaceful conflict resolution, defense, civil emergency planning, science and education, etc.

At the NATO Bucharest Summit in 2008 Allies agreed that Georgia would eventually become a member of the NATO. Following the Russian military aggression against Georgia in August 2008, the Allies expressed their readiness to assist Georgia in the process of recovery and made a decision on establishing the NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC). The NGC is considered as a mechanism to implement the decision set in hand at Bucharest Summit and oversees the assistance process in this regard. In September, 2008 NATO-Georgia Commission declaration was signed after a visit of the North Atlantic Council to Georgia and the NATO-Georgia Commission was officially established.

In December 2008 by the NATO Foreign Ministerial decision Georgia received a new integration mechanism - the Annual National Programme/ANP in the framework of NATO-Georgia Commission (For further information please see Integration Mechanisms Section).

Georgia's case is unprecedented, since according to the NATO enlargement policy practice, ANP is implemented by only those states, which are granted Membership Action Plan (MAP). The implementation of this Programme is instrumental in getting Georgia closer to NATO standards. Currently, Georgia is developing 7th cycle of the ANP.

On April 15, 2011, in Berlin, NATO-Georgia Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers adopted the first joint statement. The statement expresses Allies' support towards Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration and its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

On December 7, 2011 NATO Foreign Ministers met at NATO Headquarters and adopted the final statement on NATO's relations with partner countries where Allies referred to Georgia as an aspirant country along with Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

2012 Chicago Summit is considered as an important step forward on Georgia's NATO integration path, whereby Georgian side participated in all meetings open for partners. Following this Summit, NATO-Georgia relations moved on to the new stage as Georgia has been grouped with Balkan aspirant countries, (Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). At the Summit Georgia's sizable contribution to strengthening of Euro-Atlantic security was underlined.

Three North Atlantic Cooperation Council visits were held in Georgia in 2008, 2011 and 2013 years, which is an unprecedented number of NAC visits to any partner state.

At the NATO 2014 Summit in Wales Georgia received the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package that aims to strengthen Georgia's defence and interoperability capabilities and help Georgia advance in its preparation towards membership in the Alliance. For the effective implementation of the Package a number of activities are being carried out with the support and active involvement of NATO member states and Allies.

As one of the most active and capable partners of the Alliance, in Wales Georgia participated in all meetings open for partner countries.

Additionally, in Wales, following the Alliance decision, Georgia within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative, became member of the Interoperability Platform and Enhanced Opportunity Partner Group alongside Sweden, Finland, Australia and Jordan.

Within this format Georgia has the opportunity to participate in strategic level discussions, enhanced security arrangements and communications/information sharing with NATO and Allies, take part in NATO exercises including early phase planning, as well as get more representation for Georgian staff officers in NATO's structures.

At the Summit the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative has been extended to Georgia. The Initiative aims to reinforce NATO's commitment to partner nations and will help the Alliance to project stability without deploying large combat forces.

In the Final Communiqué of the Summit, Allies reaffirmed that Georgia will become member of NATO, thus confirming the historic decision taken in Bucharest. Along with that decision, the final Communiqué stated that Georgia's relationship with NATO contains the tools necessary to continue moving Georgia towards eventual membership. These tools are NATO-Georgia Commission, Annual National Programme and newly adopted Substantial NATO-Georgia Package.

As a significant contributor to Euro-Atlantic security, Georgia is actively involved in NATO-led operations. By participating in NATO-led operations Georgia makes significant contribution to international peace and security. Furthermore, through this participation Georgian Armed Forces acquire essential experience, which is important in terms of enhancing Georgia's defence capabilities and interoperability with NATO.

On December 1-2, 2015 at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, NATO Foreign Ministerial took place. According to the Statement, adopted after the Ministerial meeting, Allies once again reaffirmed their commitment to the NATO's Open Door Policy by inviting Montenegro to begin accession talks to join the Alliance. It is noteworthy that in this document the Allies for the first time declared that Georgia has all practical tools to prepare for the eventual membership. Moreover, Allies once again reaffirmed their commitment to the 2008 Bucharest Summit decision that Georgia will become a member of the NATO.

Furthermore, NATO members positively appraised ongoing reforms in Georgia and emphasized the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package. According to the above mentioned document, for the Warsaw summit, new, practical ways will be explored to intensify efforts for the implementation of the Package, including through high-level political dialogue as well as increased cooperation in defence and strategic communications<sup>[1]</sup>.

#### Georgia's Contribution to NATO-led Peacekeeping Operations

From to 1999-2008 the Georgian military forces were deployed in Kosovo as part of KFOR (KFOR-Kosovo Forces).

Georgia's contribution to NATO-led ISAF operation in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2014 was significant, where Georgia was the first largest troop contributor among the non-NATO states.

Georgia continues its involvement in NATO-led operation in Afghanistan and since 2015 has been participating in the Resolute Support Mission where it is the second largest troop contributor state after the US. Moreover, Georgia is part of the NATO Response Force (NRF) since 2015.

Georgia continues to participate in anti-terrorist operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea launched on the basis of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Link – [eu-nato.gov.ge](http://eu-nato.gov.ge)

MORE ABOUT GEO-NATO PARTNERSHIP

Links: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_38988.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm)

EU-NATO.gov.ge